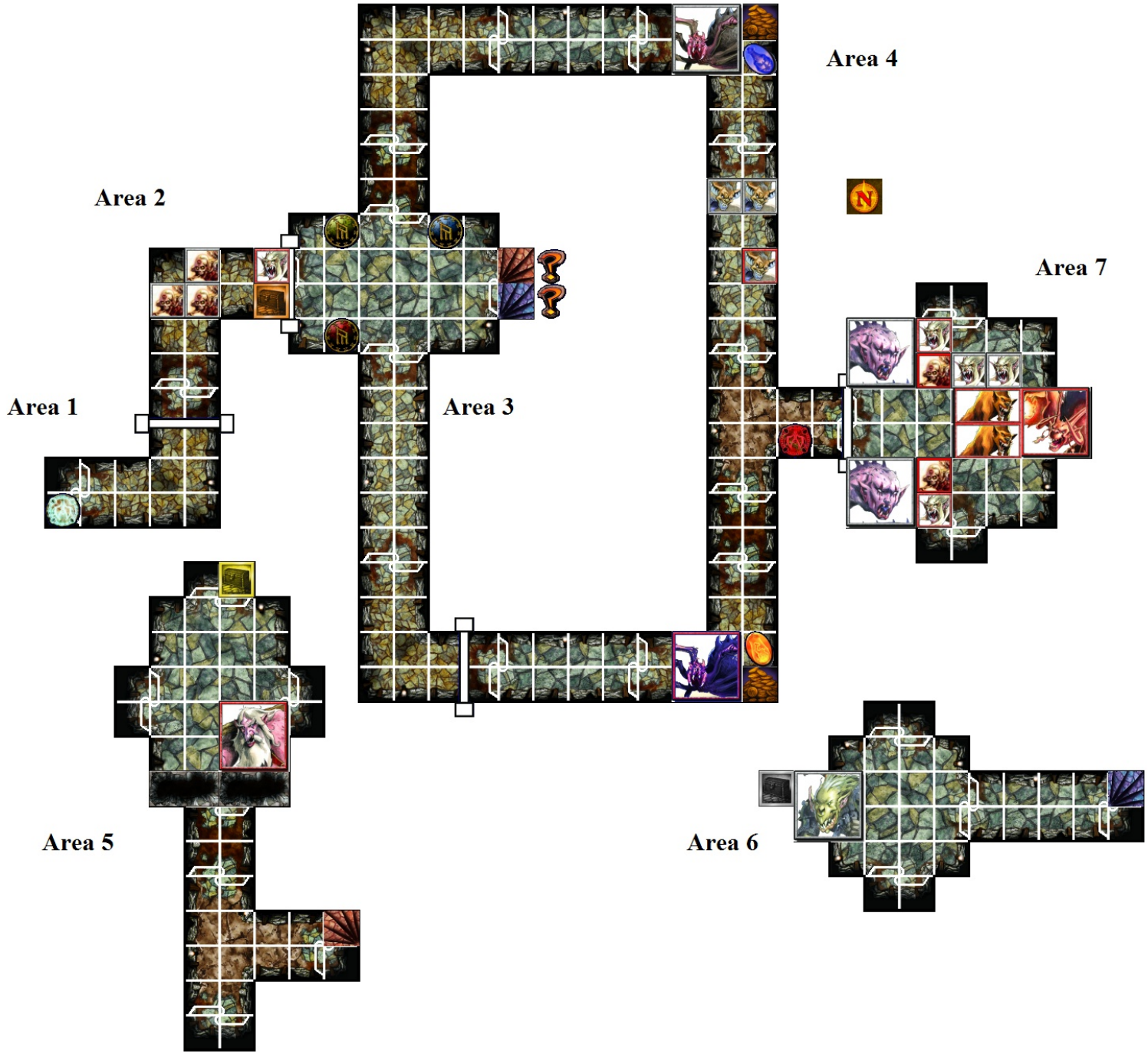

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The Ruins of the House of Elrith

By Jared Frye

This quest is designed to take less time to complete, and is the first part of a series of mini quests that I created. As such, you will notice that the heroes are granted a copper treasure almost immediately and without mishap.

Notes: The Runekeys in this quest are, instead, plates in the floor and will be called Runeplates. More instructions will follow on the use of Runeplates.

Also, in order to play this adventure with less than four heroes, simply reduce the number of Runeplates so that there is always one less Runeplate than the number of heroes.

Finally, during setup, the event tiles in area 3 are to be placed on top of the stair tiles, covering them completely. When they are flipped later, they should be flipped together.

Quest Background

While your cohorts and you were carousing at the Seeping Mushroom, bragging loudly of your adventures and drinking more than was entirely necessary of the mead, a few of the locals became agitated and left the tavern for more familiar company! The bartender, upset at the loss of his regular patrons, pushed his huge, aproned gut past the bar and sauntered up to your table. He was surly, and his breath reeked of onions.
"If you lot are so great, why don't you take on something that would at least challenge my stableboy?"
The Shadow bristled in the corner, coin spinning madly between his fingers. He kicked his muddy, booted feet up onto the table and sneered: "Watcha got in mind, barkeep?"
An evil glint in his eye, the massive tavern owner elaborated: "Not half a day's journey from here, by way of the Old Forest Road, you'll find a ruins. 'Twas the House of Elrith, they say. In its day, that Household held nearly all the wealth in this region... or the deed to it. All that remains is the cellar now, and all that treasure down there, though none so far have claimed it for fear fear of the new master of that house..."

Quest Goals

Your goal is enter the cellar below the Ruins of the House of Elrith and recover the great treasure of a bygone legacy. However, to do so may require that you defeat the One who brought the house to its Doom in the first place. If you can activate some of the ancient glyphs of transport in the cellar, your way will be easier. You start with 5 conquest tokens. If you ever run out, you fail in your quest and, probably, die horribly. Good luck.

These descriptions should be read aloud as the appropriate areas are revealed by the heroes.

Area 1

Your party of heroes found the entrance to the cellar without trouble late in the evening of the same day they had set out. The door was rotten off of its hinges. The stone steps led downward, steeper and deeper than any cellar any of you had ever been in before.

Area 2

The passageway leveled out into a sort of earthen entry hallway. The walls and ceiling hung thick with dusty cobwebs. At the end of the passage, the remains of the last unfortunates who had traveled to this place rose obediently to meet you in combat, notched bones reassembling themselves into haphazard warriors of death.

Area 3

The largest room so far of the cellar, you notice that it is filled with neither wealth nor deeds to land. It is large and empty. The floors are thick timber set roughly into the dugout earth. The walls are stone, braced in places with thick wooden frames. Set in the floor in three places around the room are bright glowing Runeplates, blue, red and yellow, with symbols like you have seen in past dungeons to unlock doors with the same marks carved in them.

If any hero steps on the event tiles while the Runeplates are not ALL covered with a hero each:

But for a few strange marks at the edge of the flag stones in the corner, nothing here seems to be out of the ordinary.

If any of the heroes step on any of the runeplates, but they are not all being covered by a hero:

There is a faint click and whirring beneath the floor boards, but nothing more...

-or-

The plate depresses slightly into the floor with a rough grating noise, but nothing happens.

-or-

The sound of muffled machinery, like clockwork gears, comes through the stone walls, but no effect can be seen...

If any of the heroes step on a runeplate while all of the other runeplates are also covered by heroes:

With a chugging sound in the floor, ending in a sharp click, the flag stones at the end of the room flip over and recede into gaps in the stonework to reveal two spiral staircases curving down into the darkness below.

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Flip the event tiles in this area over along with the stair tokens below them so that the stair tokens are now on top. Place any hero that was standing on the event token when this occurred on the corresponding stair token in area 5 or 6 and reveal that area. The hero rolls a power die and takes 2 wounds unless a surge is rolled: the hero has fallen down the newly revealed staircase!

If any of the heroes step off of the runeplates, so that all of them are not covered, each by one hero:

The flagstones flip and the entry to the stairs is immediately closed again!

Note: Only heroes may activate the Runeplates: no familiars, etc!

Area 4

A long sharply turning hall passes out of sight, choked heavily with spider webs and smelling of rodents. Not distantly enough, you can distinguish large eight legged forms shuffling in their nests.

Area 5

The sharp spiral staircase ends abruptly in a crude dungeon passage, constructed to contain monstrosities. There is no need to turn the corner to know what lies in wait... an ancient and long imprisoned giant lord, though no less venerable for his time spent here.

Area 6

The curving spiral staircase seems to have been modified after the passage was originally dug. At the bottom of this pit, lies a room filled with treasure and a great lurking horror.

Area 7

The foul stench of decadence hits you before the door is even thrown wide. You are greeted with a sight to drive all but the most stout adventurer to flee: A demonic lounge filled with the new Lord of the House of Elrith, the great demon lord, Kharneth, and his entourage. There are many foes and great treasure to be had here.

If the heroes defeat Kharneth:
If there are still minions besides the demon lord alive:

"Wait, wait...stay your hands, your swords, your claws, wings and breath of fire!" The great demon calls out to you and to his host of fiends.

With or without remaining minions:

"I beg of you," the great Kharneth begins, "Stay your fell arms, and I will make you wealthy beyond your darkest dreams."

Would the heroes strike the final killing blow? or, Would they take the gift of the devil and leave him only broken and battered for his time with them? If they strike him down:

Your killing blow strikes true and Kharneth's shrieking howl of death echoes through the cellars. You know that you will hear that sound again, if only in your nightmares.

Any monsters that have not been defeated gain one power dice for any attacks, +1 armor, and pierce 2 for the remainder of the adventure, but the Overlord player may no longer spawn creatures in this scenario.

Once any remaining enemies have been killed:

You gain 3 Conquest Tokens. Your party finds a substantial, if somewhat disappointing, fortune lying in the demon lord's lair: Some gold and gems and a few land titles that are sure to be outdated. The fortune was either originally exxagerated or had been long since squandered. None of you will be retiring anytime soon on your new found wealth, but the gold should cover your tab at the Seeping Mushroom and with luck and smart bartering, you will be well equipped for your next descent into the darkness.

If they take his deal:

The demon's foul breath quickens and he says, "Thank the Fell Moon. Here is a map..." He snatches from the ground the corpse of one of his hell hounds and, in one smooth stroke, tears its flesh from its smouldering bones. With a glowing talon and the smell of sulfer, Kharneth scratches and burns into the hide of the beast an intricate map of a dungeon. When the deed is complete, he thrusts the gruesome map at you. "This is the catacombs beneath the Agamore Park, in Vynevale. There are precious few of this plane that know it was ever there. Great are its riches for those who would risk its perils." Kharneth begins to fade into the shadows of the room, his form seeming less tangible than smoke suddenly. "I have kept my bargin and filled my obligations to you, travelers. Pray we do not meet again on my terms." And he was gone.
You gain 3 Conquest Tokens. Your party finds a substantial, if somewhat disappointing, fortune lying in the demon lord's lair: Some gold and gems and a few land titles that are sure to be outdated. The fortune was either originally exxagerated or had been long since squandered. None of you will be retiring anytime soon on your new found wealth, but the gold should cover your tab at the Seeping Mushroom and with luck and smart bartering, you will be well equipped for your next descent into the darkness.

Treachery:
3 of each: green, purple and red.

Chests:
Copper 1 3 Conquest Tokens, 1 Vitality Potion, 1 Copper Treasure.
Copper 2 2 Conquest Tokens, 150 Coins, 1 Copper Treasure
Copper 3 3 Conquest Tokens, 1 Health Potion, 1 Copper Treasure
Silver 1 3 Conquest Tokens, 1 Curse, 1 Silver Treasure
Silver 2 3 Conquest Tokens, 1 Curse, 1 Silver Treasure
Silver 3 2 Conquest Tokens, 150 Coins, 1 Silver Treasur
Gold 1 1 Curse, 1 Gold Treasure
Gold 2 2 Curses, 1 Healing Potion, 1 Gold Treasure

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